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MODERN INDIA.

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The Vedic priests base their superior strength on the knowledge of the sacrificial *mantras.** By the power of these *mantras*, the Devas are made to come down from their heavenly abodes, accept the drink and food offerings and grant the prayers of the *Yajamanas.*† The kings as well as their subjects are, therefore, looking up to these priests for their welfare during their earthly life. *Râjâ Soma*‡ is worshipped by the priest and is made to thrive by the power of his *mantras.* As such, the Devas, whose favourite food is the juice of the *Soma* plant offered in oblation by the priest, are always kind to him and bestow his desired boons. Thus strengthened by divine grace, he defies all human opposition ; for, what can the power of mortals do against that of the Gods? Even the king, the centre of all earthly power, is a supplicant at his door. A kind look from him is the greatest help ; his mere blessing a tribute to the State, pre-eminent above everything else. Now commanding the king to be engaged in affairs fraught with death and ruin, now standing by him as his fastest friend with kind and wise counsels, now spreading the net of subtle, diplomatic statesmanship in which the king is easily caught,—the priest is seen, oftentimes, to make the royal power totally subservient to him. Above all, the worst

* Vedic hymns uttered by the priests to invoke the Devas at the time of Sacrifice.

† The men who perform Sacrifices.

‡ The name of the *Soma* plant as commonly found in the Vedas. The priests offered to the Devas the juice of this plant at the time of Sacrifice.

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fear is, that the name and fame of the royal forefather and of himself and his family, lie at the mercy of the priest's pen. He is the historian. The king might have paramount power, attaining a great glory in his reign, he might prove himself as the father and mother in one to his subjects,—but if the priest is not appeased,—his sun of glory goes down with his last breath, for ever ; all his worth and usefulness deserving of universal approbation are lost in the great womb of Time, like unto the fall of gentle dew on the ocean. While others who inaugurated the huge Sacrifices lasting over many years, the performers of the *Ashvamedha* and so on—those who showered, like incessant rain in the rainy season, countless wealth on the priests,—their names, thanks to the grace of priests, are emblazoned in the pages of history. The name of Priyadarsi Dharmâsoka,* the beloved of the gods, is nothing but a name in the priestly world ; while Janamé-jaya†, son of Parikshit, is a household word in every Hindu family.

To protect the State, to meet the expenses of the personal comforts and luxuries of himself and his long retinue, and, above all, to fill to overflowing the coffers of the all-powerful priesthood for its propitiation, the king is continually draining the resources of his subjects, even as the sun sucks up moisture from the earth. His especial prey—his milch cows—are the Vaisyas.

Neither under the Hindu kings, nor under the Buddhist rule, do we find the common subject-people taking any part in expressing their voice in the affairs of the State. True, Yudhishthira visits the houses of Vaisyas and even Sudras, when he is in Vâranâvata ; true, the subjects are praying for the installation of Ramachandra to the regency of Ayodhya ; nay, they are even criticising

* The name given to the great king, Asoka, after he embraced Buddhism.

† The performer of the great snake-sacrifice of Mahabharata.

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the conduct of Sita, and secretly making plans for the bringing about of her exile : but, as a recognised rule of the State they have no direct voice in the supreme Government. The power of the populace is struggling to express itself in indirect and disorderly ways, without any method. The people have not as yet the conscious knowledge of the existence of this power. There is neither the attempt on their part to organise it into a united action, nor have they got the will to do so ; there is also a complete absence of that capacity, that skill, by means of which small and incoherent centres of force are united together, creating insuperable strength as their resultant.

Is this due to want of proper laws?—no, that is not it. There are laws, there are methods, separately and distinctly assigned for the guidance of different departments of government, there are laws laid down in the minutest detail for everything, such as, the collection of revenue, the management of the army, the administration of justice, punishments and rewards. But, at the root of all, is the injunction of the *Rishi*,—the word of divine authority, the revelation of God coming through the inspired *Rishi*. They have, it can almost be said, no elasticity in them. Under the circumstances, it is never possible for the people to acquire any sort of education, by which they can learn to combine among themselves and be united for the accomplishment of any object for the common good of the people, or by which they can have the concerted intellect to conceive the idea of popular right in the treasures collected by the king from his subjects, or, even such education by which they can be fired with the aspiration to gain the right of representation in the control of State revenues and expenditure. Why should they do such things? Is not the inspiration of the *Rishi* responsible for their prosperity and progress?

Again, all those laws are in books. Between laws as

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codified in books and their operation in practical life, there is a world of difference. One Ramachandra is born after thousands of Agnivarnas* pass away! Many kings show us the life of Chandâsoka† ; Dharmâsokas are rare! The number of kings like Akbar, in whom the subjects find their life, is far less than that of kings like Aurangzeb. who live on the blood of their people!

Even if the kings be of as godlike nature as that of Yudhisthira, Ramachandra, Dharmâsoka or Akbar, under whose benign rule the people enjoyed safety and prosperity, and were looked after with paternal care by their rulers ;—but the hand of him who is always fed by another, gradually loses the power of taking the food to his mouth. His power of self-preservation can never become fully manifest, who is always protected in every respect by another. Even the strongest youth remains but a child, if he is always looked after as a child by his parents. Being always governed by kings of godlike nature, to whom is left the whole duty of protecting and providing for the people, they can never get any occasion for understanding the principles of self-government. Such a nation, being entirely dependent on the king for everything and never caring to exert itself for the common good or for self-defence, becomes gradually destitute of inherent energy and strength. If this state of dependence and protection continues long, it becomes the cause of the destruction of the nation, and its ruin is not far to seek.

Of course, it can be reasonably concluded that, when

* Agnivarna was a prince of the Solar race, who never used to come out of the seraglio, and died of consumption due to excessive indulgence.

† The great king Asoka was at first called Chandâoska, *i.e.*, Fierce Asoka, because of his ascending the throne by killing his brother and for his other cruel deeds. After nine years of reign he became a convert to Buddhism and his character underwent a complete transformation ; he was thenceforth known for his good deeds by the name of Dharmâsoka, the beloved of the gods.

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the government of a country is guided by codes of laws, enjoined by Shâstras which are the outcome of knowledge inspired by the divine genius of great sages, such a government must lead to the unbroken welfare of the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the king and the subjects alike. But we have seen already, how far the operation of those laws was, or may be, possible in practical life! The voice of the ruled in the government of their land,—which is the watchword of the modern Western world, and, of which, the last expression has been echoed with a thundering voice in the Declaration of the American Government, in the words, "That the government of the people of this country must be by the people and for the good of the people,"—cannot however be said to have been totally unrecognised in ancient India. The Greek travellers and others saw many independent small States scattered all over this country, and references are also found, to this effect, in many places of the Buddhistic literature. And there cannot be the least doubt about it, that the germ of self-government was at least present in the shape of the village *Panchâyat*,* which is still to be found in existence in many places of India. But the germ remained for ever the germ ; the seed though put in the ground never grew into a tree. This idea of self-government never passed beyond the embryo state of the village *Panchâyat* system, and never spread into society at large.

In the religious communities, among Sannyâsins in the Buddhist monasteries, we have ample evidence to show that self-government was fully developed. Even now, one wonders to see how the power of the *Panchâyat* system, of the principles of self-government, is working amongst the *Nâgâ* Sannyâsins,—what deep respect the 'Government of the Five' commands from them, what effective

* Literally, 'government by five,' in which the village-men sit together and decide, among themselves, all disputes.

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individual rights each *Nâgâ* can exercise within his own sect, what excellent working of the power of organisation and concerted action they have among themselves!

With the deluge which swept the land by the advent of Buddhism, the priestly power fell into decay and the royal power was in the ascendant. Buddhist priests are renouncers of the world, living in monasteries as homeless ascetics unconcerned with secular affairs. They have neither the will nor the endeavour to bring and keep the royal power under their control, through the threat of curses or magic arrows. Even if there were any remnant of such a will, its fulfilment has now become an impossibility. For, Buddhism has shaken the thrones of all the oblation-eating gods and brought them down from their heavenly positions. The state of being a Buddha is superior to the heavenly positions of many a Brahmá or an Indra, who vie with each other in offering their worship at the feet of the Buddha, the God-man! And to this Buddha-hood, every man has the privilege to attain ; it is open to all, even in this life. From the descent of the gods, as a natural consequence, the superiority of the priests who were supported by them, is gone.

Accordingly, the reins of that mighty sacrificial horse —the royal power,—are no longer held in the firm grasp of the Vedic priest, and being now free it can roam anywhere by its unbridled will. The centre of power, in this period, is neither with the priests, chanting the *Sâma* hymns and performing the *Yajnas* according to the Yajur Veda ; nor is the power vested in the hands of Kshatriya kings, separated from each other and ruling over small independent States. But the centre of power in this age is in emperors whose unobstructed sway extend over vast areas bounded by the ocean, covering the whole of India from one end to the other. The leaders of this age are no longer Visvâmitra or Vasishtha, but emperors like Chandragupta, Dharmâsoka and others. There never

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were emperors who ascended the throne of India and led her to the pinnacle of her glory, like those 'lords of the earth' who ruled over her in paramount sway during the Buddhistic period. The end of this period is characterised by the appearance of Rajput power on the scene, and the rise of modern Hinduism. With the rise of Rajput power, on the decline of Buddhism, the sceptre of the Indian empire, dislodged from its paramount power, was again broken into thousand pieces and wielded by small powerless hands. At this time, the Brâhmanical (priestly) power again succeeded in raising its head, not as an adversary as before, but this time, as an auxiliary to the royal supremacy.

During this revolution, that perpetual struggle for supremacy between the priestly and the royal classes, which began from the Vedic times and continued through ages till it reached its climax at the time of the Jain and Buddhist revolutions, has ceased for ever. Now these two mighty powers are friendly to each other ; but neither is there any more that glorious Kshátra—warlike—valour of the kings, nor that spiritual brilliance which characterised the Bráhmans ; each has lost his former intrinsic strength. As might be expected, this new union of the two forces was soon engaged in the satisfaction of mutual self-interests, and became dissipated by spending its vitality on extirpating their common opponents, especially the Buddhists of the time, and on similar other deeds. Being steeped in all the vices consequent on such a union, e.g., the sucking of the blood of the masses, taking revenge on the enemy, spoliation of others' property, &c., they, in vain, tried to imitate the *Râjasuya* and other Vedic Sacrifices of the ancient kings, and only made a ridiculous farce of them. The result was that they were bound hand and foot by a formidable train of sycophantic attendance and its obsequious flatteries, and being entangled in an interminable net of rites and ceremonies with flourishes of

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mantras and the like, they soon became a cheap and ready prey to the Mahommedan invaders from the West.

That priestly power which began its strife for superiority with the royal power from the Vedic times and continued it down the ages, that hostility against the Kshatra power, Bhagavan Sri Krishna succeeded by his superhuman genius in putting a stop to, at least for the time being, during his earthly existence. That *Brâhmanya* power was almost effaced from off its field of work, in India, during the Jain and Buddhist revolutions, or, perhaps, was holding its feeble stand, by being subservient to the strong antagonistic religions. That *Brâhmanya* power, since the appearance of that of the *Rajput*, which held sway over India under the Mihira dynasty and others, made its last effort to recover its lost greatness ; and in its effort to establish that supremacy, it sold itself at the feet of the fierce hordes of barbarians, newly come from Central Asia, and to win their pleasure introduced in the land their hateful manners and customs. Moreover, it, the *Brâhmanya* power, solely devoting itself to the easy means to dupe ignorant barbarians, brought into vogue mysterious rites and ceremonies backed by its new *mantras* and the like, and in doing so, itself lost its former wisdom, its former vigour and vitality, and its own chaste habits of long acquirement. Thus it turned the whole *Aryávarta* into a deep and vast whirlpool of the most vicious, the most horrible, the most abominable, barbarous customs ; and as the inevitable consequence of countenancing these detestable customs and superstitions, it soon lost all its own internal strength and stamina, and became the weakest of the weak. What wonder that it should be broken into a thousand pieces and fall, at the mere touch of the storm of Musalman invasions from the West! That great *Bráhmanya* power fell,—who knows, if ever to rise again?

The resuscitation of the priestly power under the Musalman rule, was, on the other hand, an utter impossi-

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bility. The prophet Mahomet himself was dead against the priestly class in any shape, and tried his best for the total destruction of this power by formulating rules and injunctions to that effect. Under the Musalman rule, the king himself was the supreme priest ; he was the chief guide in religious matters ; and, when he became the emperor, he cherished the hope of being the paramount leader in all matters, over the whole Musalman world. To the Musalman, the Jew or the Christian is not an object of extreme detestation ; they are, at the worst, men of little faith. But not so the Hindu. According to him the Hindu is idolatrous, the hateful *Kafir ;* hence, in this life he deserves to be butchered ; and in the next, eternal hell is in store for him. The utmost the Musalman kings could do as a favour to the priestly class,—the spiritual guides of these *Kafirs,*—was to allow them to somehow pass their life silently and wait for the last moment. This was again sometimes considered too much kindness ! If the religious ardour of any king was a little more uncommon, there would immediately follow arrangements for a great *yajna,* by way of *Kafir*-slaughter !

On one side, the royal power is now centred in kings, professing a different religion and given to different customs. On the other, the priestly power has been entirely displaced from its influential position as the controller and law-giver of the society. The Koran and its code of laws have taken the place of the Dharma Shástras of Manu and others. The Sanskrit language has made room for the Persian and the Arabic. The Sanskrit language has to remain confined only to the purely religious writings and religious matters of the conquered and detested Hindu, and, as such, has been since living a precarious life at the hands of the neglected priest. While the priest himself, the relic of the Bráhmanya power, fell back upon the last resource of conducting only the comparatively unimportant family ceremonies, such as the matrimonial &c., and that

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also, only so long and as much as the mercy of the Mahommedan rulers permitted.

In the Vedic and the adjoining periods, the royal power could not manifest itself, on account of the grinding pressure of the priestly power. We have seen how, during the Buddhistic revolution, resulting in the fall of the Bráhmanical supremacy, the royal power in India reached its culminating point. In the interval between the fall of the Buddhistic and the establishment of the Mahommedan empire, we have seen how the royal power was trying to raise its head through the Rajputs in India, and how it failed in its attempt. At the root of this failure, too, could be traced the same old endeavours of the Vedic priestly class to bring back and revive with a new life their original (ritualistic) days.

Crushing the Bráhmanical supremacy under his feet, the Musalman king was able to restore, to a considerable extent, the lost glories of such dynasties of emperors as the Maurya, the Gupta, the Andhra and the Kshátrapa.*

Thus, the priestly power,—which sages like Kumarilla, Sankara and Ramanuja tried to re-establish, which, for some time, was supported by the sword of the Rajput power, and tried to rebuild its structure on the fall of its Jain and Buddhist adversaries,—was, under Mahommedan rule, laid to sleep for ever, knowing no awakening. In this period, the antagonism or warfare is not between kings and priests, but between kings and kings. At the end of this period, when Hindu power again raised its head, and, to some extent, was successful in regenerating Hinduism, through the Mahrattas and the Sikhs, we do not find much play of the priestly power with these regenerations. On the contrary, when the Sikhs admitted any Bráhman into their sect, they, at first, compelled him publicly to give up his previous Bráhmanical signs and adopt the recognised signs of their own religion.

* The Persian governors of Aryâvarta and Guzrat.

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In this manner, after an agelong play of action and reaction between these two forces, the final victory of the royal power was echoed on the soil of India for several centuries, in the name of foreign monarchs professing an entirely different religion from the faith of the land. But at the end of this Mahommedan period, another entirely new power made its appearance on the arena, and slowly began to assert its prowess in the affairs of the Indian world.

This power is so new, its nature and workings are so foreign to the Indian mind, its rise so inconceivable, and its vigour so insuperable, that though it wields the suzerain power up till now, only a handful of Indians understand what this power is.

We are talking of the occupation of India by England.

From very ancient times, the fame of India's vast wealth and her rich granaries has enkindled in many powerful foreign nations the desire of conquering her. She has been, in fact, again and again conquered by foreign nations. Then why should we say that the occupation of India by England was something new and foreign to the Indian mind?

From time immemorial India has seen the haughtiest royal power tremble before the angry frown of the ascetic, homeless priest, armed with his spiritual strength, his vast lore of religious wisdom, and last of all, though not the least, his weapon of indignant curse, in cases of extremity. She has also seen subject people going down like flocks of sheep before a lion, and silently obeying the commands of their all-powerful rulers backed with their awe-inspiring arms and armies. But, the sight of a country, of which the Vaisya (trading) classes, wealthiest though they be, were accustomed to pay the most servile reverence, going down on their knees, awe-stricken, not only to the king, but to any member of a royal family :—of that country, a handful of Vaisyas, coming for the purpose of carrying on trade in a foreign land, far across their native seas and oceans,

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would, merely by virtue of their shrewd intellect and wealth, gain her ancient and established Hindu and Mahommedan Dynasties to their side, and at last, by degrees, make dupes of them,—make puppets of them ; and not only so, but that they would buy as well, the services of the ruling powers of her own, and employ her arms, heroism and wisdom as powerful means for helping the influx of their own riches ;—of a country, of which a proud lord, sketched by the divine pencil of its greatest poet, warns a common man against his effronteries to a nobleman : "Out, dunghill! darest thou brave a nobleman?"—of that country, the descendants of the mighty noblemen would, in no distant future, condescend, nay, regard it as the topmost rung of the ladder of fulfilment of human ambition, to come to India as servants appointed in the service of a body of mercantile men, called The East India Company ;—such a sight was, indeed, a novelty unseen by her before!!

According to the prevalence, in greater or lesser degree of the three qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, in man, the four castes, the Bráhman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra, are everywhere present at all times, in all civilised societies. By the mighty hand of time, their number and power also vary at different times, in regard to different countries. In some countries the numerical strength or influence of one of these castes may preponderate over another ; at some period, one of the classes may be more powerful than the rest. But from a careful study of the history of the world, it appears that, in conformity to the Law of Nature, the four castes, the Bráhman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra, do, in every society, one after another in succession, govern the world.

Among the Chinese, the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Aryas, the Iranians, the Jews, the Arabs,—among all these ancient nations, the supreme power of guiding society is, in the first period

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of their history, in the hands of the Bráhman, or the priest. In the second period, the ruling power is the Kshatriya, that is, either absolute monarchy, or, oligarchical government by a chosen body of men. Among the modern Western nations, with England at their head, this power of controlling society has been, for the first time, in the hands of the Vaisyas, or mercantile communities, made rich through the carrying on of commerce.

Though Troy and Carthage of ancient times, and Venice and similar other small commercial States of comparatively modern times, became highly powerful, yet, amongst them, there was not the real rising of the Vaisya power, in the proper sense of the term.

Correctly speaking, the descendants of the royal family had the sole monopoly of the commerce of those old days, by employing the common people and their servants under them to carry on the trade, and appropriated to themselves the profits accruing from it. Excepting these few men no one was allowed to take any part, or voice their opinion even in the government of the country and kindred affairs. In the oldest countries like Egypt, the priestly power enjoyed unmolested supremacy only for a short period, after which it became subjugated to the royal power and lived as an auxiliary to it. In China, the royal power, centralised by the genius of Confucius, has been controlling and guiding the priestly power, in obedience to its absolute will, for more than twenty-five centuries, and during the last two centuries, the all-absorbing Lamas of Thibet, though they are the spiritual guides of the royal family, have been compelled to pass their days, being subject in every way to the Chinese Emperor.

In India, the royal power succeeded in conquering the priestly power and declaring its untrammelled authority long after the other ancient civilised nations had done so, and therefore, the inauguration of the Indian Empire came about long after the Chinese, Egyptian, Babylonian and

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other Empires had risen. It was only with the Jewish people that the royal power, though it tried hard to establish its supremacy over the priestly, had to meet a complete defeat in the attempt. Not even the Vaisyas attained the ruling power with the Jew. On the other hand, the common subject people, trying to free themselves from the shackles of priestcraft, were crushed to death, under the internal commotion of adverse religious movements like Christianity and the external pressure of the mighty Roman Empire.

As in the ancient days, the priestly power, in spite of its long-continued struggle, was subdued by the more powerful royal power ; so, in modern times, before the violent blow of the newly-risen Vaisya power, many a kingly crown has to kiss the ground, many a sceptre is for ever broken to pieces. Only those few thrones which are allowed to still exercise some power in some of the civilised countries, and make a display of their royal pomp and grandeur, are all maintained solely by the vast hordes of wealth of these Vaisya communities,—the dealers in salt, oil, sugar and wine,—and kept up as a magnificent and imposing front, and as a means of glorification to the really governing body behind,—the Vaisyas.

That mighty newly-arisen Vaisya power,—at whose command, electricity carries messages in an instant from one pole to another ; whose highway is the vast ocean, with its mountain-high waves ; at whose instance, commodities are being carried with the greatest ease from one part of the globe to another ; and at whose mandate, even the greatest monarchs tremble ;—on the white foamy crest of that huge wave—the all-conquering Vaisya power,—is installed, in all its grandeur, the majestic throne of England.

Therefore, the conquest of India by England is not conquest by Jesus or the Bible, as we are often asked to believe, neither is it like the conquest of India by the Moghuls and the Pathans. But behind the name of the

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Lord Jesus, the Bible, the magnificent palaces, the heavy tramp of the feet of armies consisting of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry, shaking the earth, the sounds of war trumpets, bugles and drums, and the splendid display of the royal throne,—behind all these, there is always the virtual presence of England ;—that England, whose war-flag is the factory chimney, whose troops are the merchant-men, whose battle-fields are the market-places of the world, and whose Empress is the shining Goddess Fortune herself ! It is on this account I have said before, that it is indeed an unseen novelty,—this conquest of India by England. What new revolution will be effected in India by her clash with this new giant power, and as the result of that revolution what new transformation is in store for future India,—cannot be inferred from her past history.

I have stated previously that the four castes, Bráhman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra do, in succession, rule the world. During the period of supreme authority exercised by each of these castes, some acts are accomplished, which conduce to the welfare of the people, while others are injurious to them.

The foundation of the priestly power rests on intellectual strength, and not on the physical strength of arms. Therefore, with the supremacy of the priestly power, there is a great prevalence of intellectual and literary culture. Every human heart is always anxious for communication with, and help from, the super-sensuous spiritual world. The entrance to that world is not possible for the generality of mankind ; only a few great souls, who can acquire a perfect control over their sense organs, and who are possessed with a nature preponderating with the essence of *Sattva Guna*, are able to pierce the formidable wall of Matter and come face to face, as it were, with the super-sensuous,—it is only they who know the workings of that kingdom, bring messages from it and show the Way to

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others. These great souls are the priests, the primitive guides, leaders and movers of human societies.

The priest knows the gods and communicates with them ; he is therefore worshipped as a god. Leaving behind the thoughts of the world, he has no longer to devote himself to the earning of his bread by the sweat of his brow. The best and foremost parts of all food and drink are due as offerings to the gods, and of these gods, the visible proxies on earth, are the priests. It is through their mouths that they partake of the offerings. Knowingly, or unknowingly, society gives the priest abundant leisure, and he can therefore get the opportunity of being meditative in nature and of thinking higher thoughts. Hence the development of wisdom and learning originates first with the supremacy of the priestly power. There stands the priest between the dreadful lion—the king—on the one hand, and the terrified flock of sheep—the subject people—on the other. The destructive leap of the lion is checked by the controlling rod of spiritual power in the hands of the priest. The flame of the despotic will of the king, maddened in the pride of his wealth and men, is able to burn into ashes everything that comes in his way ; but it is only a word from the priest, who has neither wealth nor men behind him but whose sole strength is his spiritual power, that can quench that despotic royal will, as water the fire. With the ascendency of the priestly supremacy, are seen the first advent of civilisation, the first victory of the divine nature over the animal, the first conquest of spirit over matter, and the first manifestation of the divine power, which is potentially present in this very slave of nature, this lump of flesh, to wit, the human body. The priest is the first discriminator of spirit from matter, the first help to bring this world in communion with the next, the first messenger from the gods to man, and the intervening bridge that connects the king with his subjects. The first offshoot of universal welfare and good is nursed by his spiritual power, by his

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devotion to learning and wisdom, by his renunciation, the watchword of his life, nay, watered even by the flow of his own life-blood. It is therefore, that in every land it was he to whom the first and foremost worship was offered. It is therefore, that even his memory is sacred to us!

There are evils as well. With the growth of life is sown simultaneously the seed of death. Darkness and light always go together. There are great evils, indeed, which, if not checked in proper time, lead to the ruin of society. The play of power through gross matter appeals to universal experience ; every one sees, every one understands, the mighty manifestation of gross material force as displayed in the play of battle-axes and swords, or, in the burning properties of fire and lightning. Nobody doubts these things, nor can there ever be any question about their genuineness. But, where the repository of power and the centre of its play are wholly mental, where the power is confined to certain special words, to certain special modes of uttering them, to the mental repetition of certain mysterious syllables, or to other similar processes and applications of the mind, there,—light is mixed with shade, there, the ebb and flow naturally disturb the otherwise unshaken faith, and there, even when things are actually seen or directly perceived, still, sometimes doubts arise as to their real occurrence. Where distress, fear, anger, malice, spirit of retaliation and the like passions of man, leaving the palpable force of arms, leaving the gross material methods to gain the end in view, which every one can understand, substitute in their stead the mysterious mental processes like *Stambhana, Uchchátana, Vasikarana* and *Márana,** for their fructification,—there, a cloud of smoky indistinctness, as it were, naturally envelops the mental atmosphere of

* *Stambhana, Uchchátana, Vasikarana* and *Márana,* are respectively,—suppression of any of the bodily faculties,—causing a person's ruin,—subduing and getting mastery over any one and killing another, —by means of magical incantations.

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those men who often live and move in such misty worlds of obscure mysticism. No straight line of action presents itself before such a mind ; even if it does, the mind distorts it into crookedness. The final result of all this is, insincerity, —that very limited narrowness of the heart ; and above all, the most fatal is the extreme intolerance born of malicious envy at the superior excellence of another. The priest naturally says to himself : "Why should I part with the power that has made the Devas subservient to me, has given me mastery over physical and mental illnesses, and has gained for me the service of ghosts, demons and other unseen spirits? I have dearly bought this power by the price of extreme renunciation. Why should I give to others that, to get which I had to give up my wealth, name, fame, in short, all my earthly comforts and happiness?" Again, that power is entirely mental. And how many opportunities are there of keeping it a perfect secret! Entangled in this wheel of circumstances, human nature becomes what it inevitably should be : being used to practise constant self-concealment, it becomes a victim of extreme selfishness and hypocrisy, and at last succumbs to the poisonous consequences which they bring in their train. In time, the reaction of this very desire to concealment redounds upon oneself. All knowledge, all wisdom is almost lost, for want of proper exercise and diffusion, and what little remains, is thought to have been obtained from some supernatural source ; and, therefore, far from making fresh efforts to go in for originality and gain knowledge of new sciences, it is considered useless and futile to attempt to even improve the remnants of the old by cleansing them of their corruptions. Thus lost to former wisdom, the former indomitable spirit of self-reliance, the priest, now glorifying himself merely in the name of his forefathers, vainly struggles to preserve untarnished for himself the same glory, the same privilege, the same veneration and the same

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supremacy as was enjoyed by his great forefathers. Consequently, his violent collision with the other castes.

According to the law of nature, wherever there is an awakening of a new and stronger life, there it tries to conquer and take the place of the old and the decaying. Nature favours the dying out of the unfit and the survival of the fittest. The final result of such conflict between the priestly and the other classes has been mentioned already.

That renunciation, self-control and asceticism of the priest, which, during the period of his ascendency, were devoted to the pursuance of earnest researches of truth, are, on the eve of his decline, employed anew and spent solely in the accumulation of objects of self-gratification and in the extension of privileged superiority over others. That power, the centralisation of which in himself gave him all honour and worship, has now been dragged down from its high heavenly position to the lowest abyss of hell. Having lost sight of the goal, drifting aimless, the priestly power is entangled, like the spider, in the web spun by itself. The chain that has been forged from generation to generation, with the greatest care, to be put on others' feet, is now tightened round its own in a thousand coils, and is thwarting its own movement in hundreds of ways. Caught in the endless thread of the net of infinite rites, ceremonies and customs, which it spread on all sides, as external means for purification of the body and the mind, with a view to keep society in the iron grasp of these innumerable bonds, —the priestly power, thus hopelessly entangled from head to foot, is now asleep in despair! There is no escaping out of it now. Tear the net and the priesthood of the priest is shaken to its foundation! There is implanted in every man, naturally, a strong desire for progress, and those, who, finding that the fulfilment of this desire is an impossibility so long as one is trammelled in the shackles of priesthood, rend this net and take to the profession of other castes in order to earn money thereby,—them, the society immediate-

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ly dispossesses of their priestly rights. Society has no faith in the Bráhman-ness of the so-called Bráhmans, who instead of keeping the *shikhâ** part their hair, who giving up their ancient habits and ancestral customs clothe themselves in semi-European dress, and adopt the newly introduced usages from the West, in a hybrid fashion. Again, in those parts of India, wherever this new-comer, the English Government, is introducing new modes of education and opening up new channels for the coming in of wealth, there, hosts of Bráhman youths are giving up their hereditary priestly profession, and trying to earn their livelihood and become rich by adopting the callings of other castes, with the result, that the habits and customs of the priestly class, handed down from their distant forefathers, are scattered to the winds and are fast disappearing from the land.

In Guzrat, each secondary sect of the Bráhmans is divided into two subdivisions, one being of those who still stick to the priestly profession, while the other lives by other professions. There, only the first subdivisions, carrying on the priestly profession, are called "Bráhmans," and, though the other subdivisions are, by lineage, descendants from Bráhman fathers, yet the former do not link themselves in matrimonial relation with the latter. For example, by the name of *"Nâgara Brâhman,"* are meant only those Bráhmans who are priests living on alms ; and by the name *"Nâgara"* only, are meant those Bráhmans who have accepted service under the Government, or those who have been carrying on the Vaisya's profession. But it appears that such distinctions will not long continue in these days, in Guzrat. Even the sons of the *"Nâgara Brâhmans"* are nowadays getting English education and entering into Government service, or adopting some mercantile business. Even orthodox Pandits of the old school, undergoing

* The sacred tuft or lock of hair left on the crown of the head at tonsure.

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pecuniary difficulties, are sending their sons to the colleges of the English universities, or making them choose the callings of Vaidyas, Kâyasthas and other non-Brâhman castes. If the current of affairs goes on running in this course, then it is a question of most serious reflection, no doubt,—how long more will the priestly class continue on India's soil. Those who lay the fault of attempting to bring down the supremacy of the priestly class at the door of any particular person, or body of persons other than themselves, ought to know that, in obedience to the inevitable Law of Nature, the Bráhman caste is erecting, with its own hands, its own sepulchre ; and this is what ought to be. It is good and appropriate that every caste of high birth and privileged nobility should make it its principal duty to raise its own funeral pyre with its own hands.

Accumulation of power is as necessary as its diffusion, or rather more so. The accumulation of blood in the heart is an indispensable condition for life,—its non-circulation throughout the body means death. For the welfare of society, it is absolutely necessary, at certain times, to have all knowledge and power concentrated in certain families or castes, to the exclusion of others, but that concentrated power is focussed for the time being, only to be scattered broadcast over the whole of society in future. If this diffusion be withheld, the destruction of that society is, without doubt, near at hand.

On the other side, the king is like the lion ; in him are present both the good and evil propensities of the lord of beasts. Never for a moment his fierce nails are held back from tearing to pieces the heart of innocent animals living on herbs and grass, to allay his thirst for blood, when occasion arises ; again, the poet says,—though himself stricken with old age and dying with hunger, the lion never kills the weakest fox that throws itself in his arms for protection. If the subject classes, for a moment, stand as impediments in the way of the gratification of the senses of

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the royal lion, their death-knell is inevitably tolled ;—if they humbly bow down to his commands, they are perfectly safe. Not only so. Not to speak of ancient days, even in modern times, no society can be found in any country, where the effectiveness of individual self-sacrifice for the good of the many, and of the oneness of purpose and endeavour actuating every member of the society for the common good of the whole, has been fully realised. Hence the necessity of the kings, who are the creations of the society itself. They are the centres where all the forces of society, otherwise loosely scattered about, are made to converge and from which they start and course through the body politic and animate society. As during the Bráhmanical supremacy, at the first stage is the awakening of the first impulse for search after knowledge, and later, the continual and careful fostering of the growth of that impulse still in its infancy,—so, during the Kshatriya supremacy, a strong desire for pleasure pursuits has made its appearance at the first stage, and later have sprung up inventions and developments of arts and sciences, as the means for its gratification. Can the king in the height of his glory hide his proud head within the lowly cottages of the poor? Or can the common food of his subjects ever minister to his royal appetite with satisfaction?

He whose dignity bears no comparison with any one else on earth, he who is divinity residing in the temple of the human body,—for the common man, to cast even a mere glance at his—the king's—objects of pleasure is a great sin, to think of ever possessing them is quite out of the question. The body of the king is not like the bodies of other people, it is too sacred to be polluted by any contamination ; in certain countries it is even believed never to come under the sway of death. A halo of equal sacredness shines around the queen, so she is scrupulously guarded from the gaze of the common folk, not even the sun may cast a glance on her beauty! Hence, the rising of magnificent

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places to take the place of thatched cottages. The sweet harmonious strain of artistic music, flowing as it were from heaven, silenced the disorderly jargon of the rabble. Delightful gardens, pleasant groves, beautiful galleries, charming paintings, exquisite sculptures, fine and costly apparel began to displace, by gradual steps, the natural beauties of rugged woods and the rough and coarse dress of the simple rustic. Thousands of intelligent men left the toilsome task of the ploughman and turned their attention to the new field of fine arts, where they could display the finer play of their intellect in the less laborious and easier ways. Villages lost their importance,—cities rose in their stead.

It was in India, again, that the kings, after having enjoyed for sometime earthly pleasures to their full satisfacfaction, were stricken at the latter part of their lives with heavy world-weariness, as is sure to follow on extreme sense-gratification ; and thus being satiated with worldly pleasures, they retired at their old age into secluded forests, and there began to contemplate on the deep problems of life. The results of such renunciation and deep meditation were marked by a strong dislike for cumbrous rites and ceremonials, and an extreme devotion to the highest spiritual truths which we find embodied in the Upanishads, the Gita and the Jaina and the Bauddha scriptures. Here also was a great conflict between the priestly and the royal powers. Disappearance of the elaborate rites and ceremonials meant a death-blow to the priest's profession. Therefore, naturally, at all times and in every country, the priests gird up their loins and try their best to preserve the ancient customs and usages ; while, on the other side, stand, in opposition, kings like Janaka, backed by Kshatriya prowess as well as spiritual power. We have dwelt at length already on this bitter antagonism between the two parties.

As the priest is busy about centralising all knowledge and learning at a common centre, to wit, himself, so the

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king is ever up and doing in collecting all the earthly powers and focussing them in a central point, *i.e.*, his own self. Of course, both are beneficial to society. At one time they are both needed for the common good of society, but that is only at its infant stage. But, if attempts be made, when society has passed its infant stage and reached its vigorous youthful condition, to clothe it by force with the dress which suited it in its infancy, and keep it bound within narrow limits, then either it bursts the bonds, by virtue of its own strength and tries to advance, or where it fails to do so, it retraces its footsteps and, by slow degrees, returns to its primitive uncivilised condition.

Kings are like parents to their subjects, and the subjects are the kings' children. The subjects should, in every respect, look up to the king, and stick to their king with unreserved obedience, and the king should rule them with impartial justice and look to their welfare, and bear the same affection towards them as he would towards his own children. But what rule applies to individual homes, applies to the whole society as well, for society is only the aggregate of individual homes. "When the son attains the age of sixteen, the father ought to deal with him as his friend and equal,"*—if that is the rule, does not the infant society ever attain that age of sixteen? It is the evidence of history that at a certain time every society attains its manhood, when a strong conflict ensues between the ruling power and the common people. The life of the society, its expansion and civilisation depend on its victory or defeat in this conflict. Such changes revolutionising society have been happening in India again and again, only in this country they have been effected in the name of religion.

* Taken from one of the well-known didactic verses of the statesman-Pandit Chânakya, which runs thus:—"Let the father treat with tenderness the child till he is five, let him (the father) reprove him (the child) for the next ten years; when the son attains the age of sixteen, the father ought to deal with him as his friend."

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for religion is the life of India, religion is the language of this country, the symbol of all its movements. The Chárváka, the Jaina, the Bauddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj,—of all these and similar other sects, breaks in the front,—foaming, thundering, surging,—the wave of religion, while in the rear follows the filling-up of social wants. If all desires can be accomplished by the mere utterance of some meaningless syllables, then who will exert himself and go through difficulties to work out the fulfilment of his desires? If this malady enters into the entire body of any social system, then that society becomes slothful and indisposed to any exertion, and soon hastens to its ruin. Hence the slashing sarcasm of the Chárvákas, who believed only in the reality of sense-perceptions and nothing beyond. What could have saved Indian society from the ponderous burden of omnifarious ritualistic ceremonialism with its animal and other sacrifices, which all but crushed the very life out of it, except the Jaina revolution, which took its strong stand exclusively on chaste morals and philosophical truths?—or without the Bauddha revolution, what would have delivered the suffering millions of the lower classes from the violent tyrannies of the influential higher castes? When, in course of time, Buddhism declined and its extremely pure and moral character gave place to equally bad, unclean and immoral practices, when Indian society trembled under the infernal dance of the various races of barbarians who were allowed into the Buddhistic fold by virtue of its universal all-embracing spirit of equality,—then Sankara and, later, Ramanuja appeared on the scene and tried their best to bring society back to its former days of glory and re-establish its lost status. Again, it is an undoubted fact, that if there had not been the advent of Kabir, Nanak, and Chaitanya, in the Mahommedan period, and the establishment of the Bráhmo Samaj, and the Arya Samaj in our own day, then, by this time, the Mahom-

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medans and the Christians would have far outnumbered the Hindus of the present day, in India.

What better material is there than nourishing food to build up the body composed of various elements, and the mind which sends out infinite waves of thought? But if that food which goes to sustain the body and strengthen the mind is not properly assimilated, and the natural functions of the body do not work properly, then that very thing becomes the root of all evil.

The individual's life is in the life of the whole, the individual's happiness is in the happiness of the whole ; apart from the whole, the individual's existence is inconceivable ;—this is an eternal truth, and is the bed-rock on which the universe is built. To move slowly towards the infinite whole, bearing a constant feeling of intense sympathy and sameness with it, being happy with its happiness and being distressed in its affliction, is the individual's sole duty. Not only is it his duty, but in its transgression is his death, while compliance with this great truth leads to life immortal. This is the law of Nature ; and who can throw dust into her ever-watchful eyes? None can hoodwink society and deceive it for any length of time. However much there may have accumulated heaps of refuse and mud on the surface of society,—still, at the bottom of those heaps the life-breath of society is ever to be found pulsating with the vibrations of universal love and self-denying compassion for all. Society is like the earth that patiently bears incessant molestations ; but she wakes up one day, however long that may be in coming, and the force of the shaking tremors of that awakening hurls off to a distance the accumulated dirt of self-seeking meanness, piled up during millions of patient and silent years!

We ignore this sublime truth and though we suffer a thousand times for our folly, yet, in our absurd foolishness, impulsed by the brute in us, we do not believe in it. We try to deceive, but thousand times we find we are deceived

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ourselves, and yet we do not desist! Mad that we are, we imagine we can impose on Nature! With our short-sighted vision we think, ministering to the self at any cost is the be-all and end-all of life.

Wisdom, knowledge, wealth, men, strength, prowess, and whatever else Nature gathers and provides us with, are all only for diffusion, when the moment of need is at hand; we often forget this fact, put the samp of *"mine only"* upon the entrusted deposits, and, *pari passu*, sow the seed of our own ruin!

The king, the centre of the forces of the aggregate of his subjects, soon forgets that those forces are only stored with him so that he may increase and give them back a thousand-fold in their potency, with the result that they may spread over the whole community for its good. Attributing all godship to himself, in his pride, like the king Vena* he looks upon other people as wretched specimens of humanity who should grovel before him; any opposition to his will, whether good or bad, is a great sin on the part of his subjects. Hence oppression steps into the place of protection,—sucking their blood in place of preservation. If the society is weak and debilitated, it silently suffers all ill-treatment at the hands of the king, and as the natural consequence, both the king and his people go down and down and fall into the most degraded state, and thus become an easy prey to any nation stronger than themselves. Where the society is healthy and strong, there soon follows a fierce contest between the king and his subjects, and, by its reaction and convulsion, are flung away the

* His story occurs in the Bhagavatam. The King Vena thought himself higher than Brahmâ, Vishnu and Maheshvara, and declared accordingly that all worship should be offered to him. The Rishis once sought him and tried by good advice to make him give up such egoism, but he in return insulted them and ordered them to worship him. Whereupon, it is said, he was destroyed by the fire of the anger of the Rishis.

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sceptre and the crown, and the throne and the royal paraphernalia become like past curiosities preserved in the museum galleries.

As the result of this contest—as its reaction—is the appearance of the mighty power of the Vaisya, before whose angry glance the crowned heads, the lords of heroes, tremble like an aspen leaf on their thrones,—whom the poor as well as the prince humbly follow in vain expectation of the golden jar in his hands, that like Tantalus' fruit always recedes from the grasp.

The Bráhman said, "Learning is the power of all powers ; that learning is dependent upon me, I possess that learning, so the society must follow my bidding" ; for some days such was the case. The Kshatriya said, "But for the power of my sword, where would you be, O Bráhman, with all your power of lore? You would in no time be wiped off the face of the earth. It is I alone that am the superior." Out flew the flaming sword from the jingling scabbard,—society humbly recognised it with bended head. Even the worshipper of learning was the first to turn into the worshipper of the king. The Vaisya is saying, "You, madmen! what you call the effulgent all-pervading deity, is here, in my hand, the ever-shining Gold, the Almighty Sovereign. Behold, through its grace, I am also equally all-powerful. O Bráhmana! even now, I shall buy through its grace all your wisdom, learning, prayers and meditation. And, O great king! your sword, arms, valour and prowess will soon be employed, through the grace of this, my Gold, in carrying out my desired objects. Do you see those lofty and extensive mills? Those are my hives. See, how swarms of million bees, the Sudras, are incessantly gathering honey for those hives ; do you know for whom? For me, this me, who in due course of time squeeze out from behind every drop of it for my own use and profit."

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As during the supremacy of the Bráhman and the Kshatriya, there is a centralisation of learning and advancement of civilisation, so the result of the supremacy of the Vaisya is accumulation of wealth. The power of the Vaisya lies in the possession of that coin, the charm of whose chinking sound works with an irresistible fascination on the minds of the four castes. The Vaisya is always in fear lest the Bráhman swindles him out of this, his only possession, and lest the Kshatriya usurps it by virtue of his superior strength of arms. For self-preservation, the Vaisyas, as a body, are, therefore, of one mind. The Vaisya commands the money ; the exorbitant interest that he can exact for its use by others, as with a lash in his hand, is his powerful weapon which strikes terror in the heart of all. By the power of his money, he is always busy in curbing the royal power. That the royal power may not anyhow stand in the way of the inflow of his riches, the merchant is ever watchful. But, for all that, he has never the least wish that the power should pass on from the kingly to the Sudra class.

To what country does not the merchant go? Though himself ignorant, he, in carrying on his trade, transplants the learning, wisdom, art and science of one country to another. The wisdom, civilisation and arts that accumulated in the heart of the social body, during the Bráhman and the Kshatriya supremacies, are being diffused in all directions by the arteries of commerce to the different market-places of the Vaisya. But for the rising of this Vaisya power, who would have carried to-day the culture, learning, acquirements, and articles of food and luxury of one end of the world to the other?

And where are they, through whose physical labour only are possible, the influence of the Brâhman, the prowess of the Kshatriya, and the fortune of the Vaisya? What is their history, who, being the real body of society, are designated, at all times, in all countries, as "they—the

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base-born"? For whom kind India prescribed the mild punishments, "Cut out his tongue, chop off his flesh," and others of like nature, for such a grave offence as any attempt on their part to gain a share of the knowledge and wisdom monopolised by her higher classes,—those "moving corpses" of India, and the "beasts of burden" of other countries,—the Sudras,—what is their lot in life? What shall I say of India? Let alone her Sudra class,—her Brâhmans, to whom belonged the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, are now the foreign professors, her Kshatriyas the ruling Englishman, and Vaisyas too, the English, in whose bone and marrow is the instinct of trade ; so that, only the Sudra-ness—the-beast-of-burdenness—is now left with the Indians themselves. A cloud of impenetrable darkness has at present equally enveloped us all. Now there is neither firmness of purpose nor boldness of enterprise, neither courage of heart, nor strength of mind, neither aversion to maltreatments by others, nor dislike for slavery, neither love in the heart, nor hope, nor manliness; but what we have in India are only deep-rooted envy and strong antipathy against one another, morbid desire to ruin by hook or by crook the weak, and dog-like, to lick the feet of the strong. Now the highest satisfaction consists in the display of wealth and power, devotion in self-gratification, wisdom in the accumulation of transitory objects. Yoga in hideous diabolical practices, work in the slavery of others ; civilisation in base imitation of foreign nations, eloquence in the use of abusive language, the merit of literature in extravagant flatteries of the rich, or in the diffusion of ghastly obscenities! What to speak separately of the distinct Sudra class of such a land, where the whole population has virtually come down to the level of the Sudra? The Sudras of countries other than India have become, it seems, a little awake ; but they are wanting in proper education, and have only the mutual hatred of men of their own class,—a trait common to Sudras. What avails

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it if they greatly outnumber the other classes? That unity, by which ten men collect the strength of a million, is yet far away from the Sudra ; hence, according to the law of nature, the Sudras invariably form the subject race.

But there is hope. In the mighty course of time, the Brâhman and the other higher castes too, are being brought down to the lower status of the Sudras, and the Sudras are being raised to higher ranks. Europe, once the land of Sudras, enslaved by Rome, is now filled with Kshatriya valour. Even beore our eyes, powerful China, with fast strides, is going down to Sudra-hood, while insignificant Japan, rising with the sudden start of a rocket, is throwing off her Sudra nature, and is invading by degrees the rights of the higher castes. The attaining of modern Greece and Italy to Kshatriya-hood, and the decline of Turkey, Spain and other countries, also deserve consideration here.

Yet, a time will come, when there will be the rising of the Sudra class, *with their Sudra-hood* ; that is to say, not like that as at present, when the Sudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaisya or the Kshatriya, but a time will come, when the Sudras of every country, with their inborn Sudra nature and habits, —not becoming in essence Vaisya or Kshatriya, but remaining as Sudras,—will gain absolute supremacy in every society. The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already begun to slowly break upon the Western world, and the thoughtful are at their wits' end to reflect upon the final issue of this fresh phenomenon. Socialism, Anarchism, Nihilism* and like other sects, are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow. As the result of grinding pressure and tyranny, from time out of mind, the Sudras, as a rule, are either meanly servile, licking dog-like the feet of the higher classes, or otherwise are as inhuman

* Socialism took its birth in 1835 A.D. The initiator of Anarchism was Bakunin, who was born in 1814 A.D. Nihilism was first inaugurated in Russia in 1862.

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as brute beasts. Again, at all times their hopes and aspirations are baffled ; hence, of firmness of purpose and perseverance in action they have none.

In spite of the spread of education in the West, there is a great hindrance in the way of the rising of the Sudra class, and that is the recognition of caste as determined by the inherence of more or less good, or bad, qualities. By this very qualitative caste system which obtained in India in ancient days, the Sudra class was kept down, bound hand and foot. In the first place, scarcely any opportunity was given to the Sudra for the accumulation of wealth, or the earning of proper knowledge and education ; to add to this disadvantage, if ever a man of extraordinary parts and genius were born of the Sudra class, the influential higher sections of the society forthwith showered titular honours on him and lifted him up to their own circle. His wealth and the power of his wisdom were employed for the benefit of an alien caste,—and his own caste-people reaped no benefit of his attainments ; and not only so, the good-for-nothing people, the scum and refuse of the higher castes, were cast off and thrown into the Sudra class to swell their number.

Vasishtha, Nârada, Satyakâma Jâbâla, Vyâsa, Kripa, Drona, Karna and others of questionable parentage* were raised to the position of a Brâhman or a Kshatriya, in virtue

* (1) Vasishtha's father was Brahmá and mother unknown. (2) Narada's mother was a maid-servant and father unknown. (3) Satyakama Jabala's mother was a maid-servant, by name Jabala, and father unknown. (4) Vyasa's father was a Bráhman sage, Parasara, and mother, Matsyagandha, the virgin daughter of a fisherman. (5) Kripa's father was a Bráhman sage, Saradvan Gautama, and mother, the goddess Janapadi. (6) Drona's father was the Bráhman sage, Bharadwaj, and mother, tht goddess Ghritachi (7) Karna's mother was Kunti, who conceived during her maidenhood, and father, the god Sun. For detailed information, *vide* the accounts of their births, for (1) in chapter 174, Adiparva, Mahabharata, or in Rigveda, 7, 33, 11-13; for (2) in chapter 6, skandha 1, Srimat Bhagavatam; for

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of their superior learning or valour ; but it remains to be seen how, by these upliftings, the prostitute, maid-servant, fisherman, or the charioteer* class was benefited. Again, on the other hand, the fallen from the Brâhman, the Kshatriya, or the Vaisya class, were always brought down to fill the ranks of the Sudras.

In modern India, no one born of Sudra parents, be he a millionaire or a great Pandit, has ever the right to leave his own society, with the result that the power of his wealth, intellect or wisdom, remaining confined within his own caste limits, is being employed for the betterment of his own community. This hereditary caste system of India, being thus unable to overstep its own bounds, is slowly but surely conducing to the advancement of the people moving within the same circle. The improvement of the lower classes of India will go on, in this way, so long as she will be under a Government dealing with its subjects irrespective of their caste and position.

Whether the leadership of society be in the hands of those who monopolise learning, or wield the power of riches or arms, the source of its power is always the subject masses. By so much as the class in power severs itself from this source, by so much is it sure to become weak. But such is the strange irony of fate, such is the queer working of Maya, that they from whom this power is directly or indirectly drawn, by fair means or foul,—by deceit, stratagem, force, or by voluntary gift,—they soon cease to be taken into account by the leading class. When in course of time, the priestly power totally estranged itself from the

(3) in section 4, Prapathaka iv. Chhandogya Upanishad; for (4), (5), (6) & (7), chapters, 105, 130, 130 and 111, respectively of the Adiparva of the Mahabharata.

* In her anxiety to save her reputation, Kunti threw the new-born child, Karna, into water. A charioteer found the child in this pitiable condition and took him home. Henceforth, the child was kept under the charioteer's parental care.

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subject masses,—the real dynamo of its power,—it was overthrown by the then kingly power taking its stand on the strength of the subject people ; again, the kingly power, judging itself to be perfectly independent, created a gaping chasm between itself and the subject people, only to be itself destroyed, or become a mere puppet in the hands of the Vaisyas, who now succeeded in securing a relatively greater co-operation of the mass of the people. The Vaisyas have now gained their end ; so, they no longer deign to count on help from the subject people, and are trying their best to dissociate themselves from them ; consequently, here is being sown the seed of the destruction of this power as well.

Though themselves the reservoir of all powers, the subject masses, creating an eternal distance between one another, have been deprived of all their legitimate rights ; and they will remain so, as long as this sort of relation continues.

A common danger, or sometimes a common cause of hatred or love, is the bond that binds people together. By the same law that herds beasts of prey together, men also unite into a body and form a caste or a nation of their own. Zealous love for one's own people and country, showing itself in bitter hatred against another—as of Greece against Persia, of Rome against Carthage, of the Arab against the Kaffir, of Spain against the Moor, of France against Spain, of England and Germany against France, and of America against England,—is undoubtedly one of the main causes, which led to the advancement of one nation over the other, by way of uniting itself in hostilities against another.

Self-love is the first teacher of self-renunciation. For the preservation of the individual's interest only, one looks first to the well-being of the whole. In the interest of one's own nation is one's own interest ; in the well-being of one's own nation is one's own well-being. Without the

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co-operation of the many, most works can by no means go on,—even self-defence becomes an impossibility. The joining of friendly hands in mutual help for the protection of this self-interest is seen in every nation, and in every land. Of course, the circumference of this self-interest varies with different people. To multiply and to have the opportunity of living a precarious, hand-to-mouth existence, and over and above this, the condition that the religious pursuits of the higher castes may not suffer in any way, is of the highest gain and interest for Indians! For modern India, there is no better hope conceivable ; this is the last rung of the ladder of India's life!

The present Government of India has certain evils attendant on it, and there are some very great and good parts in it as well. Of highest good is this, that after the fall of the Pataliputra Empire till now, India was never under the guidance of such a powerful machinery of Government as the British, wielding the sceptre throughout the length and breadth of the land. And, under this Vaisya supremacy, thanks to the strenuous enterprise natural to the Vaisya, as the objects of commerce are being brought from one end of the world to another, so at the same time as its natural sequence, the ideas and thoughts of different countries are forcing their way into the very bone and marrow of India. Of these ideas and thoughts, some are really most beneficial to her, some are harmful, while others disclose the ignorance and inability of the foreigners to determine what is truly good for the inhabitants of this country.

But, piercing through the mass of whatever good or evil there may be, is seen rising the sure emblem of India's future prosperity—that as the result of the action and re-action between her own old national ideals, on the one hand, and the newly-introduced strange ideals of foreign nations, on the other, she is slowly and gently awakening from her long deep sleep. Mistakes she will make,—let

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her, there is no harm in that ; in all our actions, errors and mistakes are our only teachers. Who commits mistakes, the path of truth is attainable by him only. Trees never make mistakes, nor do stones fall into error ; animals are hardly seen to transgress the fixed laws of Nature ; but man is prone to err, and it is man who becomes God-on-earth. If our every movement from the nursery to the death-bed, if our every thought from rising at daybreak till retirement at midnight, be prescribed and laid down for us in minutest detail by others—and, if the pressure of the king's sword be brought into requisition to keep us within the iron grasp of those prescribed rules,—then, what remains for us to think independently for ourselves? What makes a man genius, a sage?—Isn't it because he thinks,—reasons,—wills? Without exercise, the power of deep thinking is lost, Tamas prevails, the mind gets dull and inert, the spirit is brought down to the level of matter. Yet, even now, every religious preacher, every social leader is anxious to frame new laws and regulations for the guidance of society!!! Does the country stand in want of rules? Has it not enough of them? Under the oppression of rules, the whole nation is verging on its ruin,—who stops to understand this?

In the case of an absolute and arbitrary monarchy, the conquered race is not treated with so much contempt by the ruling power. Under such an absolute government, the rights of all subjects are equal, in other words, no one has any right to question or control the governing authority. So, there remains very little room for special privileges of caste and the like. But, where the monarchy is controlled by the voice of the ruling race, or a republican form of government rules the conquered race, there, a wide distance is created between the ruling and the ruled ; and the most part of that power, which if employed solely for the well-being of the ruled classes might have done immense good to them within a short time, is wasted by the govern-

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ment, in its attempts and applications to keep the subject race under its entire control. During the Roman Emperorship, her foreign subjects were, for this very reason, happier than under the Republic of Rome. For this very reason, St. Paul, the Christian Apostle, though born of the conquered Jewish race, obtained permission to appeal to the Roman emperor, Cæsar, to judge of the charges laid against him.* Because some individual Englishman may call us "natives" or "niggers," and hate us as uncivilised savages, we do not gain or lose by that. We, on account of caste distinctions, have among ourselves, far stronger feelings of hatred and scorn against one another ; and who can say that the Brâhmans, if they get some foolish unenlightened Kshatriya king on their side, will not graciously try again to "cut out the Sudras' tongues and chop off their limbs"? That recently in Eastern Aryâvarta, the different caste-people seem to develop a feeling of united sympathy amidst themselves, with a view to ameliorate their present social condition,—that, in the Mahratta country, the Brâhmans have begun to sing pæans in praise of the "Maratha" race,—these, the lower castes cannot yet believe to be the outcome of pure disinterestedness. But, gradually, the idea is being formed in the minds of the English public, that the passing away of the Indian Empire from their sway will end in imminent peril to the English nation, and be their ruin. So, by any means whatsoever, the supremacy of England must be maintained in India. The way to effect this, they think, is by keeping uppermost in the heart of every Indian, the mighty prestige and glory of the British nation. It gives rise to both laughter and tears simultaneously, to observe how this ludicrous and pitiful sentiment is gaining ground among the English, and how they are steadily extending their *modus operandi* for the carrying out of this sentiment into practice. It seems as if

* The Acts, XXV, 11.

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the Englishmen resident in India are forgetting that, so long as that fortitude, that perseverance, and that intense national unity of purpose, by which Englishmen have earned this Indian Empire,—and that ever wide-awake commercial genius aided by science, which has turned even India, the mother of all riches, into the principal mart of England,—so long as these characteristics are not eliminated from their national life, their throne in India is unshakable. So long as these qualities are inherent in the British character, let thousands of such Indian Empires be lost, thousands will be earned again. But, if the flow of the stream of those qualities be retarded, shall an Empire be governed by the mere emblazoning of British prestige and glory? Therefore, when such remarkable traits of character are still predominant in the English as a nation, it is utterly useless to spend so much energy and power for the mere preservation of meaningless "prestige." If that power were employed for the welfare of the subject-people, that would certainly have been a great gain for both the ruling and the ruled races.

It has been said before, that India is slowly awakening through her friction with the outside nations ; and as the result of this little awakening is the appearance, to a certain extent, of free and independent thought in modern India. On one side, is modern Western science, dazzling the eyes with the brilliancy of myriad suns, and driving in the chariot of hard and fast facts collected by the application of tangible powers direct in their incision ; on the other, are the hopeful and strengthening traditions of her ancient forefathers, in the days when she was at the zenith of her glory,—traditions, that have been brought out of the pages of her history by the great sages of her own land and outside, that run for numberless years and centuries through her every vein with the quickening of life drawn from universal love,—traditions, that reveal unsurpassed valour, superhuman genius, and supreme spirituality, which are the

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envy of the gods,—these inspire her with future hopes. On one side, rank materialism, plenitude of fortune, accumulation of gigantic power, and intense sense-pursuits have through foreign literature caused a tremendous stir ; on the other, through the confounding din of all these discordant sounds, she hears, in low yet unmistakable accents, the heart-rending cries of her ancient gods, cutting her to the quick. There lie before her various strange luxuries introduced from the West,—celestial drinks, costly well-served food, splendid apparel, magnificent palaces, new modes of conveyance,—new manners, new fashions, dressed in which moves about the well-educated girl in shameless freedom,—all these are arousing unfelt desires in her ; again, the scene changes and in its place appear, with stern presence, Sita, Savitri, austere religious vows, fastings, the forest retreat, the matted locks and orange garb of the semi-naked Sannyasin, Samadhi and the search after the Self. On one side, is the independence of Western societies based on self-interest ; on the other, is the extreme self-sacrifice of the Aryan society. In this violent conflict, is it strange that Indian society should be tossed up and down? Of the West, the goal is—individual independence, the language—money-making education, the means—politics ; of India, the goal is—Mukti, the language—the Veda, the means—renunciation. For a time, Modern India thinks as it were,—I am ruining this worldly life of mine in vain expectation of uncertain spiritual welfare hereafter, which has spread its fascination over me ; and again, lo! spell-bound she listens,—इति संसारे स्फुटतरदोषः। कथमिह मानव तव सन्तोषः॥—"Here, in this world of death and change, O man, where is thy happiness?"

On one side, New India is saying, "We should have full freedom in the selection of husband and wife ; because, the marriage in which are involved the happiness and misery of all our future life, we must have the right to determine, according to our own free will." On the

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other, Old India is dictating, "Marriage is not for sense enjoyment, but to perpetuate the race. This is the Indian conception of marriage. By the producing of children, you are contributing to, and responsible for the future good or evil of the society. Hence, society has the right to dictate whom you shall marry and whom you shall not. That form of marriage obtains in society, which is conducive most to its well-being ; do you give up your desire of individual pleasure for the good of the many."

On one side, New India is saying, "If we only adopt Western ideas, Western language, Western food, Western dress and Western manners, we shall be as strong and powerful as the Western nations" ; on the other, Old India is saying, "Fools! By imitation, other's ideas never become one's own,—nothing, unless earned, is your own. Does the ass in the lion's skin become the lion?"

On one side, New India is saying, "What the Western nations do are surely good, otherwise how did they become so great?" On the other side, Old India is saying, "The flash of lightning is intensely bright, but only for a moment; look out, boys, it is dazzling your eyes. Beware!"

Have we not then to learn anything from the West? Must we not needs try and exert ourselves for better things? Are we perfect? Is our society entirely spotless, without any flaw?—There are many things to learn, we must struggle for new and higher things till we die,—struggle is the end of human life. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "As long as I live, so long I learn." That man or that society, which has nothing to learn, is already in the jaws of death. Yes, learn we must many things from the West,—but there are fears as well.

A certain young man of little understanding used always to blame Hindu Shastras before Sri Ramakrishna. One day he praised the Bhagavad-Gita, on which Sri Ramakrishna said, "Methinks, some European Pandit has praised the Gita, and so he has also followed suit."

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O India, this is your terrible danger. The spell of imitating the West is getting such a strong hold upon you, that what is good or what is bad, is no longer decided by reason, judgment, discrimination, or reference to the Shastras. Whatever ideas, whatever manners the white men praise or like, are good ; whatever things they dislike or censure, are bad ! Alas ! What can be a more tangible proof of foolishness than this ?

The Western ladies move freely everywhere,—therefore, that is good ; they choose for themselves their husbands,—therefore, that is the highest step of advancement ; the Westerners disapprove of our dress, decorations, food and ways of living,—therefore, they must be very bad ; the Westerners condemn Image-worship as sinful,—surely then, Image-worship is the greatest sin, there is no doubt of it !

The Westerners say, that worshipping a single Deity is fruitful of the highest spiritual good,—therefore, let us throw our Gods and Goddesses into the river Ganges ! The Westerners hold caste distinctions to be obnoxious,—therefore, let all the different castes be jumbled into one ! The Westerners say, that child-marriage is the root of all evils,—therefore, that is also very bad, of a certainty it is !

We are not discussing here, whether these customs deserve countenance or rejection ; but if the mere disapproval of the Westerners be the measure of the abominableness of our manners and customs, then, it is our duty to raise our emphatic protest against it.

The present writer has, to some extent, personal experience of Western society. His conviction resulting from such experience has been, that there is such a wide divergence between the Western society and the Indian as regards the primal course and goal of each, that any sect in India, framed after the Western model, will miss the aim. We have not the least sympathy with those who,—never having lived in Western society and, therefore, utterly

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ignorant of the rules and prohibitions regarding the association of men and women that obtain there, and which act as safeguards to preserve the purity of the Western women,—allow a free rein to the unrestricted intermingling of men and women in our society.

I observed in the West also, that the children of weaker nations, if born in England, give themselves out as Englishmen, instead of Greek, Portuguese, Spaniard, etc., as the case may be. All drift towards the strong ;—that the light of glory which shines in the glorious, may anyhow fall and reflect on one's own body, *i.e.*, to shine in the borrowed light of the great, is the one desire of the weak. When I see Indians dressed in European apparel and costumes, the thought comes to my mind,—perhaps, they feel ashamed to own their nationality and kinship with the ignorant, poor, illiterate, down-trodden people of India ! ! Nourished by the blood of the Hindu for the last fourteen centuries, the Parsee is no longer a "Native" ! Before the arrogance of the casteless, who pretend to be and glorify themselves in being Brâhmans, the true nobility of the old, heroic, high-class Brâhman melts into nothingness ! Again, the Westerners have now taught us that those stupid, ignorant low-caste millions of India clad only in loin cloths are non-Aryans ! ! They are therefore no more our kith and kin ! ! !

Oh India ! With this mere echoing of others, with this base imitation of others, with this dependence on others, this slavish weakness, this vile detestable cruelty,—wouldst thou, with these provisions only, scale the highest pinnacle of civilisation and greatness? Wouldst thou attain, by means of thy disgraceful cowardice, that freedom deserved only by the brave and the heroic? Oh India ! Forget not —that the ideal of thy womanhood is Sita, Savitri, Damayanti ; forget not—that the God thou worshippest is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all-renouncing Sankara, the Lord of Uma ; forget not—that thy marriage, thy wealth,

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thy life are not for sense-pleasure,—are not for thy individual personal happiness ; forget not—that thou art born as a sacrifice to the *Mother's* altar ; forget not—that thy social order is but the reflex of the Infinite Universal Motherhood ; forget not—that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian,—and proudly proclaim,—"I am an Indian,—every Indian is my brother." Say,—"The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brâhman Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother." Thou too clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice,—"The Indian is my brother,—the Indian is my life, India's gods and goddesses are my God, India's society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the *Vârânasi*, of my old age." Say, brother,—"The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good," and repeat and pray day and night,—"O Thou Lord of Gauri, O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me ! O Thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and—Make me a Man !"

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